

**TOWN OF MANSFIELD  
Special Town Council Meeting  
Mansfield Senior Center  
Saturday, February 1, 2003**

**Minutes**

Present: B. Bellm, A. Hawkins, E. Holinko, E. Paterson, W. Rosen, C. Thorkelson

Staff: M. Berliner, M. Hart, J. Smith

**Call to Order**

The Mayor called the meeting to order at 9:05 a.m.

**New Business**

1. Municipal Action Day at the Capitol

The Town Manager reviewed the "Municipal Action Day" being planned by the Connecticut Conference of Municipalities (CCM) for February 18, 2003. CCM has designed the event to demonstrate to state legislators "what municipalities do, who municipalities are, and why they oppose mid-year and other cuts in state aid." The program for the day will consist of a parade of municipal vehicles, a press conference and meetings with state legislators. The Town Manager requested the Council's authorization to send a contingent from Mansfield to participate. By consensus, the Council supported this recommendation and directed the Manager to send a contingent from Mansfield to participate in the program.

2. Update Concerning the Town's Financial Position

The Director of Finance and the Town Manager led a review of the following items:

- State and Municipal Fiscal Indicators
- Consumer Price Index
- Mill Rate Increases
- October 1, 2002 Grand List
- Tax Exempt Real Property
- State Mid-year Grant Cuts
- Financial Statements
- Capital Improvement Program Update
- Capital Improvement Program – Status of Open Space
- 5-year Capital Improvement Program
- 5-year Capital and Non-recurring Plan Update
- Mansfield Board Data
- Region 19 Board Data
- Mansfield Five-year Forecast
- Economic Outlook

The Town Manager also discussed General Fund revenues for the current fiscal year. Because we anticipate a substantial shortfall, the Manager has implemented the following corrective measures:

- 1) Left vacant an open Secretary II position in Social Services
- 2) Eliminated the part-time Inmate Work Crew Supervisor position
- 3) Reduced hours for the Kennel Cleaner and Assistant Animal Control Officer
- 4) Capped police over-time
- 5) Will leave vacant a soon to be open Assistant Building Official position

In aggregate, these measures will save approximately \$50,000 for the current fiscal year. Consequently, the town will need to take further action to avoid a deficit. The Manager stated that the Council probably has three strategies at its disposal:

- 1) Do nothing and use fund balance to cover the shortfall
- 2) Implement significant expenditure cuts
- 3) Implement a strategy of revenue increases and expenditure cuts

At this point, the Manager requested authorization to proceed with the corrective measures that he has identified thus far. By consensus, the Council authorized the Manager to move forward.

With regard to the Capital Improvement Program, Council member Rosen suggested that staff push the Southeast Park improvements project to an out-year, and to look to community donations to fund this project. The Manager agreed to pull a committee together to review this proposal. Also in relation to this item, Council member Bellm stated that staff should: 1) determine what overall operating and maintenance costs are for the Southeast facility; and 2) examine to what extent other participating towns can contribute to the project. Council member Bellm also asked staff to identify the planned accessibility improvements at Spring Hill field.

In addition, the Town Manager reviewed a planned recession list to the Capital and Non-recurring Revenue Fund. The list is necessary to avoid a deficit in the fund and, at a future meeting in February or March, staff will present this item to the Council.

Staff and the Council then discussed several issues concerning education:

- The Director of Finance was asked to meet with the Mansfield Superintendent of Schools to determine future special education needs
- Council member Bellm asked staff for more information concerning all-day kindergarten. In concept, he supports doubling the hours of attendance, but would not support doubling the workload for participating children.
- Council member Bellm requested that staff identify if there were discrepancies between the salaries for certified personnel at the Mansfield Public Schools and Region 19
- The Town Manager reviewed his intention to ask Region 19 to fund the EO Smith social worker position

Lastly, the Town Manager reviewed a couple of miscellaneous items:

- Staff has discussed the idea of Community Center lifetime memberships with the town's

marketing consultant, and the consultant supports the concept

- Staff has also discussed the concept of trading goods for services, such as special 3-month Community Center memberships for advertising, and will request a legal opinion from the Town Attorney regarding this issue. By consensus, the Council supported the concept of trading goods for services.
- The Town Manager reviewed the operating subsidy from the Capital and Non-recurring Reserve Fund to the Community Center
- The Town Manager alerted the Council to the fact that the police have an active investigation underway concerning the recent automobile accident at the Spring Hill cemetery

### **Adjournment**

The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 12:05 p.m.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew W. Hart  
Assistant Town Manager